

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the subject application are respectfully requested in light of the amendments above and the comments which follow.

Claims 1-21 were pending in this application. In this response, claims 19-21 are amended. Thus, claims 1-21 remain pending.

Support for the foregoing amendments can be found, for example, in at least the following locations in the original disclosure: the original claims, and Figures 1- 4.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,524,034 to Eng et al. (hereafter “*Eng*”) in view U.S. Patent No. 3,175,850 to Steczynski (hereafter “*Steczynski*”) on the grounds set forth at page 2 of the Official Action. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Eng discloses serrated mating surfaces in which the pitches between the ridges of respective connecting surfaces are the same. Also, the mating surfaces include ridges separated by grooves.

Steczynski discloses grooves having increased widths, the increased width is a result of decreasing the depth of the grooves. These grooves are embodied in a taper pipe thread. *Steczynski* stated goal is to provide a “new wide angle V-thread”, particularly with a shallow contour (col. 2, lines 4-9).

Even considering the proposed combination of *Eng* with *Steczynski*, the rejection is improper as a 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection because the rejection has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. At least one element of the claims are not taught in the cited references.

Applicants agree with the Examiner that *Eng* fails to disclose “widths of two or more grooves positioned one after the other in a series in one of the connecting surfaces increasing progressively from a first groove to a last groove in the series.” *See, e.g.*, p. 2 of the Office Action. Although *Steczynski* discloses grooves having increased widths, the increased width is a result of decreasing the depth of the grooves. *See, e.g.*, Figs. 4 and 4a referenced by the Examiner. *Steczynski* does not teach a surface containing grooves with progressively increasing width where the depth of each groove is the same. Therefore, any modification of *Eng* based on the teachings of *Steczynski* would result in a surface wherein the depth of each groove would not be the same. Thus, the proposed combination of *Eng* and *Steczynski* does not teach all of the claim limitations. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection for at least this reason.

In addition and relevant to the discussion here, Figs. 4 and 4a referenced by the Examiner discloses vanishing threads, which appear from the figures to have ridges with flanks 16,18 that are at a constant angle from one ridge to another. Such constant flanks would be expected in the disclosed threading feature of *Steczynski*. Only by varying the depth of the groove, *e.g.*, by the chamfer angle, is the vanishing thread arrangement produced. Thus, the varying widths between successive grooves occurs in *Steczynski* by concurrently reducing the depth of the grooves. This is directly contrary to the claims at issue here. Thus, as proposed, the combination is deficient and a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established.

Further, any modification of *Steczynski* to have the same depth between the two or more grooves would result in a non-vanishing thread. Therefore, not only would such a modification cause a different feature of the claims to not be present in the proposed combination, *i.e.*, the

varying widths, but also would cause the structure in *Steczynski* to be unsuitable for its intended purpose. As such, prima facie obviousness would not be established. See, MPEP § 2143.01.

For at least the above noted reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-21 are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner feel that any issues remain, it is requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any such issues may be adequately addressed and prosecution of the instant application expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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